

Resources Open Opportunities To Students (ROOTS)

Weatherford College

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QEP Executive Summary

Weatherford College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is based on the belief that **Resources Open Opportunities To Students (ROOTS)**. Our intention is for the **ROOTS** QEP goals and programs to become part of the Weatherford College (WC) Culture of Caring and support the College's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan and beyond. WC has struggled to improve student success in key performance indicators such as graduation, program and course retention, and efficient generation of hours to completion; however, the 2021 QEP addresses these issues. Weatherford College's mission embraces a culture of excellence, fostering the success of all its students and enriching the communities it serves through innovative, affordable, and accessible learning and cultural opportunities, and the **ROOTS** program will help achieve these goals.

Beyond the key performance indicators, institutional data reveal patterns that suggest pathways for improvement. IDEA Faculty and Course Evaluation responses indicated students were satisfied with instructors, courses, and workloads. Excluding gateway courses such as math and composition, the average grade of students completing general education courses was in the eightieth percentile. Responses to the College's 2020 Omnibus Survey suggested that only half of WC's students participated in freshman orientation, used tutoring services, career advising, and skills assistance. These findings were consistent with the results of a 2018 survey indicating only half of all students were aware of the institution's Student Life and Academic Support Center resources. Rates of partially completed admissions, federal aid, and scholarship applications suggest that critical factors influencing student non-success are occurring beyond the classroom. To address these issues, the Weatherford College QEP will focus on flipped and holistic advising models, Guided Pathways communities with faculty mentors, and Canvas integration of resources, including career readiness toolkits.

The **ROOTS** Canvas Resource Room is being designed to offer a comprehensive, easy-to-navigate hub of resources that will lead students to both online and face-to-face help from application to graduation, encouraging students to actively participate in the advising process throughout their college career. Academic success at Weatherford College is dependent on more than academic preparedness.

The national Guided Pathways project has done excellent work in underscoring the need for reforming advising, instruction, and student services processes to match the realities of students' current lives and future goals (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Research on student mindset also suggests that a sense of belonging can improve outcomes for students from less-advantaged backgrounds (Romero, 2018).

The Weatherford College Quality Enhancement Plan will address these factors. With that purpose, the **ROOTS** program will include required orientation, flipped and holistic advising, mentoring programs, Canvas integration, and career readiness inventories.